

[Mr. Ayres forwards, in all, eight of these Plovers, all shot in September, and four of them still retaining some remains of the rufous gorget assumed during the breeding-season.—J. H. G.].

GALINAGO MAJOR (Gmel.) Solitary Snipe.

Male, a moulting specimen, killed 16th January.

GALLINAGO ÆQUATORIALIS, Rüpp. Black-quilled Snipe.

Female, a moulting specimen, killed 27th December.

[In a letter dated 30th April, 1878, Mr. Ayres mentions, as an unusual circumstance, that these Snipes were at that time breeding near Potchefstroom, their more usual nesting-time being in August*.—J. H. G.]

307. TRINGA SUBARQUATA, Gmel. Curlew Sandpiper.

The specimen sent was shot 24th November on some mud-banks in a swamp near Potchefstroom, in company with several others of this species and of other Sandpipers, including *Tringa minuta*.

[The bird sent is in full winter dress.—J. H. G.]

HYDROCHELIDON LEUCOPTERA (Temmin.). White-winged Tern.

Male and female, immature, shot 24th November.

Several of these Terns were hawking over a swamp some eight miles from Potchefstroom, with a slow, uncertain, wavy flight. The stomachs of those sent contained insects.

XXXI.—*Remarks upon the Phasianus ignitus of Latham and the allied Species.* By D. G. ELLIOT, F.R.S.E. &c.

IN a communication to this Journal published in the January number of the present year, I stated that as soon as I should have an opportunity of examining the specimen of the Fire-backed Pheasant with chestnut flanks, referred by Mr. Selater to *Phasianus ignitus*, Lath., I would give my opinion as to its specific value. On a late visit to London I found in the collection of the British Museum a single specimen of this

* *Conf. Ibis*, 1869, p. 302.

form, presented by Mr. J. R. Reeves, and stated on the stand to have been brought from China! Before giving a description of the plumage of this example, it will be as well, perhaps, to recall what is published by Latham of this bird in his 'Index Ornithologicus,' Suppl. p. lxi (1801). It is as follows:—

“*PHASIANUS IGNITUS*. *Ph. niger chalybeo-nitens, lateribus corporis rufis, dorso imo igneo-ferrugineo, rectricibus intermediis subfulvis. Habitat in Java?*” &c.

The first impression received on looking at the British-Museum specimen was, that, so far as the flanks and belly were concerned (the chief points of specific difference), it was not in perfect plumage; and I regret that more examples are not available for comparison. The feathers of these parts exhibit an uncertain, irregular, and in some places, I may say, an abnormal style of coloration, that gave rise at once to the belief that either the bird was passing through a transformation incidental to a change of plumage towards the fully adult state, or else to a suspicion, growing stronger as the examination proceeded, that it belonged to a hybrid. On both sides of the breast, below the dark blue, are numerous chestnut feathers whose centres and tips are more or less streaked with *white*, a hue that cannot surely be considered as proper in that place, although it may be an unsuccessful effort to portray the white central streaks of the flank-feathers observed in the bird I designate in my “*Phasianidæ*” as *P. ignitus*; a bird which, perhaps, was possibly one of its progenitors. The feathers of the abdomen, with the exception of those exactly in the middle, are chestnut, tipped or margined with black in a most irregular way, sometimes the apical portion of a feather being chestnut and all the rest black. I judge from this that these feathers are in the process of change to an entirely chestnut hue, possibly like those of *P. nobilis*. Two specimens of this last, adult males from Borneo, are also in the collection, both of which have the centre of the abdomen *black*, and the base of the chestnut feathers also of that hue, which is occasionally perceptible through that chestnut colour; and therefore there is nothing

about these parts which would entitle the "Chinese" individual to put forward a claim to a distinct rank. If we turn to the back, it is observed that the colouring of the lower part in the "Chinese" example is lighter than that of *P. nobilis*, and more like the bird called by me *P. ignitus* (*P. vieilloti*, Sclater); but I find that the two specimens of *P. nobilis* differ in this respect, one being much darker than the other; so there is evidently a variation in the hues of the rump, and it is not impossible that specimens may be found of *P. nobilis* as lightly coloured on the back as is this "Chinese" one. Another feature in this unsatisfactory bird is the colour of the median rectrices. This is *white*, and therefore does not answer to Latham's description of *P. ignitus*, as he uses the term *subfulvus* to describe the hue of these feathers. The median rectrices of *P. nobilis*, so far as I am aware, although they vary from a dark to a light buff, never become white, which, however, is the colour of those in the birds called *P. vieilloti* by Sclater. The points therefore of difference between this "Chinese" example and the two well-known species are these:—From *P. nobilis* it differs chiefly in the white central rectrices; and from *P. ignitus*, or *vieilloti*, as this form has been called by naturalists, it differs in the chestnut flanks. The bird may be said to represent exactly an intermediate stage between the two species just named, with indications strongly suggestive of hybridism; and as its origin is open to serious doubt, and as it is without any name certainly applicable to it (Latham's description of *P. ignitus* not agreeing, as already shown), its status can only be satisfactorily determined when the exact locality from which the bird comes is first authentically ascertained. The habitat "China" attached to the specimen cannot be considered as the true one; for no such form as *Euplocamus* is found in China; and as the specimen undoubtedly came from that land, the bird has probably been bred by the Chinese, possibly by mating together the two species already recognized. In support of the view that the specimen has been in captivity, I would add that nearly half the primaries have been cut away, evidently to prevent its escaping, which would certainly not have been

the case if the bird had been killed wild. As I formerly suggested might be the case, I now consider *P. ignitus* of Latham the same as *P. nobilis* of Sclater, the latter name becoming a synonym; and the second species, called by me *P. ignitus*, should be known as *P. vieilloti*; for, judging by the specimen in the British Museum, I fail to perceive any indications that would prove the existence of a third species of this section of the genus *Euplocamus*.

XXXII.—*Contributions to the Ornithology of Borneo.* By R. BOWDLER SHARPE, F.L.S., F.Z.S., &c. Part III.* *On two Collections of Birds from Sarawak.*

OF two collections which I desire to notice in the present paper, one is a small one made by one of Governor Ussher's hunters during a three days' stay at Sarawak. The man, by name Buak, was unfortunately seized with panic, and fled to Labuan for fear of the Dyaks, much to the Governor's disappointment; we shall hear of him again in our next paper, which will contain an account of Governor Ussher's consignments from North-western Borneo and Labuan. The following is a list of the collection of Sarawak birds sent me by Governor Ussher:—

1. *Microhierax fringillarius* (Drap.).
2. *Calorhamphus fuliginosus* (Temm.).
3. *Megalæma mystacophonus* (Temm.).
4. *Surniculus lugubris* (Horsf.).
5. *Coccystes coromandus* (Bodd.).
6. *Halcyon concreta* (Temm.). New to Sarawak.
7. *Dendrochelidon comata* (Temm.).
8. *Leucocerca perlata* (S. Müll.).
9. *Philentoma velata* (Temm.).
10. *Philentoma pyrrhoptera* (Temm.).
11. *Chaptia malayensis*, Hay.
12. *Dicrurus annectens*, Hodgs. New to Borneo.
13. *Dissemurus brachyphorus* (Temm.).

* For Part II., see 'Ibis,' 1877, p. 1.